

# HUMILITY

Represented in the

4379.2.3

+ Character of St. PAUL.

The chief *SPRINGS* of it  
opened,

And its various *ADVANTAGES*  
display'd;

Together with some occasional Views  
of the contrary Vice.

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By *I. Watts*, D. D.

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2 COR. xii. 11.

*I am become a Fool in glorying, ye have compelled me.—In nothing am I behind the very chiefest of the Apostles, though I be nothing.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for R. FORD at the *Angel*, and R.  
HETT at the *Bible and Crown*, both in the  
*Poultry*, 1737.

(Price One Shilling.)

H. MILLIT

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The chief SPRINGS of

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And its various ADVANTAGES

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Together with some occasional Views  
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D. D.

2 COR. XII. 11.

I am become a Fool in glorying in my weakness  
we. — in revealing my infirmities to you  
of the apostle, though I am writing.

LONDON:

Printed for R. TAYLOR at the Angel, and R.  
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(Price One Shilling.)



## P R E F A C E.

**I** Hope there will be something found in these Papers, which is suited to rectify the vicious Disorders of the Mind, to subdue the foolish Vanity of human Nature, and promote a meek and humble Spirit; But I am sure, they can have no such Influence, while they continue to sleep in a Desk where they have lain many Years already. If the Divine Grace shall so far attend the Publication of them now, as to make them attain these happy Ends, my Duty will be Thankfulness and Praise.

While I have endeavoured to trace out the Pride of the Heart in the various and general Appearances of it, both in higher and lower Life, I have carefully avoided the particular Description of any Person living. By this Means my Representation of true Humility in the moral and religious Springs and Advantages of it, together with some  
Views

*Views of the opposite Vice, may have a more kindly and powerful Effect upon every Reader. Conviction and Reproof are much better received when such Hints only are given, as may lead Conscience in Secret to search out the Criminals, and may teach them to set their own Folly and Guilt and Danger before themselves. We all like to do this Work best in Retirement and Silence. And I hope my Readers will be so kind and so just both to themselves and to me, as to be more diligent in the Discovery and Cure of any Weakness of their own, than in pointing out Censure for their Neighbours; though it must be confest there is sufficient Matter for it in every Corner of the World.*

*Surely if we could but look down upon Mankind with an all-surveying Eye as the great God doth, we should see a dreadful and universal Spread of this Vice of Pride over all the Race of Man, and an infinite Number of Mischiefs derived from it, and diffused through Kingdoms and Churches, thro'*

3

all

## P R E F A C E

*all human Societies and personal Affairs. Had we such a View as this, one would think every Son and Daughter of Adam should labour Night and Day to root out this cursed and poisonous Plant, till not a Branch or Fibre of it remained to infect the Earth. Pride was the Ruin of Angels: Pride was the Fall of Man: Ye shall be as Gods was the great Temptation, and the Event is we are become like Devils: nor doth the Array of Flesh and Blood which we wear, cover our Shame or excuse our Iniquity.*

*God has sent his Son Jesus into the World in the Likeness of Man, and in all the Forms of Humiliation, that he might teach us by his Word and his Example to be meek and lowly, and shew us how to regain the divine Favour and Image, by laying the Foundation of his Gospel and of our Recovery in Humility of Soul: Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. And next to his own Son God has set his Servant Paul for our Pattern,*  
*who*



*who calls himself, Less than the least of all the Saints, and persuades us to be Followers of him as he is of Christ.*

*I have not drawn out at large here the particular Rules and Directions for acquiring these lovely Virtues of Christian Humility and Meekness, having written so many Chapters of Advice how to subdue Pride and Wrath and other Vices in my little Treatise of the Passions, and to these I refer my Readers under the divine Blessing.*

Newington, March

25th, 1737.

# HUMILITY

Represented in the  
Character of St. Paul, &c.

EPHES. iii. 8.

*Less than the least of all Saints.*

## INTRODUCTION.

**H**OW meanly does this great and holy Man, this chiefest of the Apostles speak of himself? To how low a Degree does he sink himself and his exalted Virtues? To how narrow a Compass does he reduce all his own natural Talents, his acquired Excellencies and even his Divine Qualifications? *Less than the least*, ἐλαχιστότερος: 'Tis a Greek Word made on Purpose to signify the exceeding diminutive Idea he had of himself, and it is very happily rendered by our *English* Translators.

B

How

How different is our common Behaviour from that of holy *Paul*? When we think of SELF we are ready to raise our Thoughts beyond all Measure and aggrandize our Ideas to a vast and shameful Degree, as though we stood as fair and as large and as high in the Eyes of our Fellow-Worms as we do in our own Eyes. Vain Imagination! Wretched Self-flattery and foolish Pride! We take the least of Words, the least of Syllables, the least of Letters (*I*) and swell and amplify it (if I may so speak) to fill a Page, or to spread over a whole Leaf, and we scarce leave a scanty Margin for all other Names to stand in: Nothing less than a Volume will contain or display our Characters and our due Praises. We set so many Flourishes round our own Names and fill our own Eyes with them, that we can see nothing else. All other Names lye concealed and dis-appear while our own ingrosses our Sight and Admiration. We make every Thing else look so little, as though it were fit only to lye neglected and forgotten, while SELF or I should be alone beheld and alone regarded. But the great Apostle who had more Excellencies and real Honors than a thousand of us put together, gives his Thoughts a different Turn; what am I? (says he) a little mean worthless Thing, to be intrusted with this glorious Gospel, and to have such divine Favors conferred on me? *I am nothing* that is grand and exalted, but *the least of all the Saints*, and *less than the least of them*. When, O my Soul,  
when



when wilt thou learn to copy after so illustrious an Example, so divine a Pattern of Humility?

But not to paraphrase any longer on this Matter here at large let us enter into Particulars.

Perhaps some Persons may expect that I should spend Time here to distinguish and determine exactly *what sort of Opinion and Esteem we ought to have of ourselves.* Surely a Man of Letters and Education is not bound to think himself as illiterate as a Peasant, nor a Youth of Ingenuity to fancy himself a Fool: A Person of Figure and Quality must not suppose himself in all Respects upon a Level with the lower Ranks of Mankind, nor can it be but that a Man of Sense and Virtue, of Religion and Goodness must know himself to be of superior Worth and Merit to the rude and the wicked Multitude. Do not Nature and Reason direct us to judge of Persons as well as Things according to Truth? Nor does the best of Religions forbid us to pass a true and right Judgment concerning our *selves* or concerning our fellow-Creatures.

Besides, it is proper and necessary that a Man should have in some Measure a just Idea of himself, that he may every where in his Conduct and Behavior maintain his own Character, and answer the Demands of his own Station with Justice and Honor both in the World and in the Church. What is it then we are to understand by this *diminishing Idea of Self*, which was so honourable in the great

Apostle, and which is so worthy of our Imitation.

To this Inquiry I shall give but a short Answer, for I allow all that is here proposed by Way of Query or Objection to be just and true. I grant 'tis our Duty to know ourselves for many valuable Purposes both in Life and Religion, and to form a just Sentiment (as near as we can) of our own Qualifications and our Place and Rank amongst our Fellow-Creatures. But as the honorable Example of St. Paul directs us, so the Design of my present Advice lies here, (*viz.*) that *in passing a Judgment concerning our Selves we should always set a strong Guard on the Side of Self-love and Flattery*: We should watch against the Pride of our Hearts, which is every Moment ready to overrate all Appearances of what is valuable in us, and forgets to bring our Defects into the Balance of the Account; Pride spies out those Excellencies in us which none else can see, while it conceals and lessens our evil Qualities so as to reduce them almost to nothing. By this Means the Judgment that we form concerning *our Selves* is for the most part mistaken and criminal: we hearken to the Prejudices of our Self-love; we view our Virtues through a magnifying Glass in the Sunshine, and cast our Vices into Shade and Concealment. We carry always about us these false Representations of *our Selves*, this vain Picture which is so very unlike the Original: We speak and act and live according to this bright and great and mistaken

mistaken Idea of *Self*, and thereby we plunge ourselves into many Errors, Iniquities and Mischiefs.

And especially when we happen to compare our *Selves* with *Others*, our *Envy* arises to assist the Work, and offers its wretched and dangerous Aid to help on the Comparison. We soon spy out all their Blemishes and Imperfections, and lessen their Character in order to exalt our own. Thus while *Pride* on the one Side brightens and aggrandizes our own Image, and on the other Side *Envy* detracts from the Image of our Neighbour, sullies his Virtues and darkens his Honors, we act our relative Parts in the World in a very irregular Manner, under the Influence of these erroneous Sentiments and Ideas.

The *mean Opinion of Self* therefore that by the Pattern of the Apostle I would recommend to my own Heart and to all my Friends, is this, that in taking a just Estimate of every Thing that relates to ourselves or to our Fellow-Creatures, we should keep a strict Watch against the Dangers of these selfish Passions and Prejudices; and we should always make large Allowances for those false and glaring Colours wherewith our Vanity paints and adorns our own Image, and for those deceitful Weights which *Pride* is ever flinging into our own Scale, to make our Virtues appear solid and weighty; and we should make the same Allowances for those dark and disgraceful Shades of Vice and Folly which *Envy* spreads over

our



## 6 *Humility represented, &c.*

our Neighbours Character, and those for Reproaches wherewith she loads the opposite Scale while we are weighing the Virtues of our Neighbours, in order to make them seem lighter.

The Bulk of Mankind are so generally given to err on this Hand, that is, to overvalue themselves and depreciate their Neighbours; and the Number of those who make a Mistake on the other Side is so exceeding small, that in proposing general Directions for our Conduct there is scarce any Need of a Caution or Guard against the humble and self-denying Kinds of Mistake. Then is our Opinion concerning ourselves and our Neighbours agreeable to the Rule and Temper of Christianity, and generally nearer the Truth, when we sink our Idea of *Self* rather below what seems to us to be our Due, and when we raise the Idea of our Neighbours a little above what appears to belong to them, for they doubtless have some Virtues and good Qualities unknown to us, and 'tis certain we have some secret Failings which do not usually come within our own Notice. But I shall touch upon this Subject perhaps once again, and therefore I proceed to the general Heads of my Discourse.

Here I shall enquire *First*, whence comes it to pass that St. *Paul* forms so diminutive an Idea of himself, and calls himself *less than the least of all the Saints*: and *Secondly*, What blessed Advantages may we obtain by this lessening View of our Selves in Imitation of such an Example.

SECT.

## SECT. I. *The Springs of Humility.*

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### SECT. I.

#### *The Springs of St. Paul's Humility.*

**T**HE first Thing to be inquired is, *Whence comes it to pass that St. Paul forms such diminutive Ideas of himself?*

I answer 1<sup>st</sup>. From a constant Sense of his own former Iniquities, and an ever present Conscience of Sin that dwells in him. You may read this Account in himself in many of his Epistles. 1 Cor. xv. 9. *I am the least of the Apostles, and am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* 1 Tim. i. 13, 15. *I was before a Blasphemer and a Persecutor and Injurious: and in this View I am the Chief of Sinners.* Rom. vii. 14, 18, 24. *I am carnal, sold under Sin. In me, that is in my Flesh, dwelleth no good Thing: Oh wretched Man that I am!* Each of us are best acquainted with our Selves, and know best what our own former Sins and Follies have been. Some of us perhaps have been suffer'd to fall into more criminal Actions and shameful Iniquities than others; but there is not one of us who has not sinned enough to make him lye humble in the Dust, and think meanly of himself if our former Iniquities were always kept in View. But alas! we are much inclined to forget our Sins, to cast them behind our Back, to turn our Eyes away from them; it is a painful and an uneasy Sight; while at the same Time we  
vainly

vainly turn our Eyes to our own fancied Excellencies, and with Pleasure we dwell long in the Survey of our own real or imagined Qualifications and Virtues : We aggrandize our little worthless *Selves* into Idols, and then we worship the vain Image which our Pride has made. We pay much Incense of Self-flattery and Praise to the swelling and exalted Idea of the little worthless Name *I* or *Me*.

Come, my Soul, come, let the holy Apostle teach thee to secure thy self against the Danger and Deceit of this foolish Pride : Let him instruct thee how to depress and keep down this rising Tumor, this fermenting swelling Thing SELF. Take a frequent Survey of thy former Sins and Follies ; look into thy Heart ; behold the hourly Workings of Iniquity there ; what Abatements of thy fancied Honor, what Defilements and Stains and inward Shame wilt thou find upon thee ? Methinks, there is something elegant and exalted in the Language of a famous *English* Poet \*, while he is humbling the Vanity of human Nature beneath the Brute Creatures, and even beneath the Things which have neither Sense nor Life.

*Let the proud Peacock his gay Feathers spread  
And court the Female to his painted Bed :  
Let Winds and Seas together rage and swell ;  
This Nature teaches, and't becomes them well.  
Pride was not made for Man. A conscious Sense  
Of Guilt and Folly and their Consequence*

\* *Waller.*

*Destroys*



Sect. I. *St. Paul's Humility.*

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*Destroys the Claim, and to Beholders tells,*  
“*Here nothing but the Shape of Manhood dwells.*”

As if he should say, “Here is not that glorious Thing, that honourable and holy Creature *Man*, as he was first made by the Hands of God, and stampt with the Divine Image : here is nothing but the mere outward Shape and Figure, Shadow and Appearance of him, divested of his original Dignities, bereft of his inward and superior Glories.”

If such a Saint as *Paul*, of the first Degree, could call himself *the Chief of Sinners* and *less than the least of all the Saints*, and would frame a new Word for it because there was none ready made in all the copious Language of the *Greeks*, which was sufficiently diminutive to express his humble Thoughts of himself, what new lessening Names, what unknown Words of Abasement must we form to give our selves our own true Character, who fall so far beneath this Apostle ?

2dly, While the Apostle depresses himself so much below his fellow-Saints, he not only remembers his own Failings, *but he seems to look upon others without their Blemishes* ; and this is one Way whereby he comes to sink the Idea of his own Character in Comparison of theirs. His Goodness and his Love cover all their Follies and keep them as it were out of Sight, while he compares himself with them : *Charity covers a Multitude of Sins*. He practises that great Duty in his Epistle to the *Epheſians*  
C  
when

when he calls himself *Less than the least of the Saints*, which he recommends in his Letter to the Christians at *Rome*, Rom. xii. 10. *Be kindly affection'd one to another with brotherly Love, in Honour preferring one another.* Oh when shall we arrive at this Spirit and learn this holy Lesson of Love? When shall we think of our fellow Christians and leave their Faults out of our Ideas of them? How ready are we to spy out their Blemishes, and fix our Eye first upon their little Spots and the Abatements of their Virtue? and then we exalt our selves while we forget our own Failings, and imagine that we are higher and better than all around us.

Dost thou not know, O my Soul, more of the Vices of thy Nature and of the Sins of thy Life, than thou knowest of any of thy fellow Christians? Why then should thy Vanity tempt thee to think so much better of thy self than thou dost of them? One would think thy own Guilt and Follies, which are so well known to thee, should do more to abase thee in thy own Eyes than all thy Suspicions of the Folly and Guilt of thy Neighbours should do to sink their Character in thy Esteem. Remember this, that for the most part 'tis but a Rumour and Suspicion of the Sins of thy Brethren that lessens thy Esteem of them; but thou hast an inward Consciousness and Assurance of thy own Frailties and thy own Vileness, which might more powerfully abase thy Pride and teach thee to cry out with

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with the Apostle, *Less than the least of all the Saints.*

3dly, I might add in the last Place, another Spring of his Humility was *an abiding Sense of the infinite Greatness and Holiness of God, and the unsearchable Excellencies and Glories of his Son Jesus.* This is a Sight which stains the Glory of all Flesh, and brings the Haughtiness of Man down to the Dust. This I confess does not so directly tend to this comparative Humility, this abasing himself below his Fellows, but it has a mighty Influence on this Virtue absolutely considered, and therefore I name it.

The Apostle maintains upon his Spirit grand Ideas of the great God, *the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach, whom no Man hath seen nor can see, to whom belongs Honour and Power everlasting.* What an Atom, what a Dust of Being, what a dark and diminutive Thing is *Man* under the lively Apprehension of a present God, a God of such Majesty and Brightness? And in the Words following my Text he is surveying the *Grandeurs of Christ, by whom God created all Things, and the unsearchable Riches of his Grace,* Eph. iii. 8, 9. And how mean and little must every *Son of Adam* appear in the Presence of this *Son of God*? He looks upon himself as poor and contemptible in the View of such unsearchable Riches and Glory.



A sinful and fallen Man, who has been favour'd with some Attainments above his Neighbours, when he stands in the Midst of sinful and fallen Men, may perhaps appear something great and honourable; but when he sets himself before a holy God, and before *Christ* the Son of his Love, and the express Image of his Glories, he must then think himself despicably little, and covered with Meannesses and Dishonours. So a Worm or a Emmet that is a little larger than his Brethren may lift up itself among fellow-Emmets or fellow-Worms; but the Foot of a Man treads it to the Dust, and it appears a worthless and unregarded Thing.

Oh my Soul, if thou would'st lessen thyself as a Creature and a Christian ought to do, live much in the Sight of God *as seeing him that is invisible*. When God appears in the Glory of his Holiness, God in the Person of his Son *Jesus* in his pre-existent State, as *St. John* tells us in *Chap. xii.* then the *Seraphs* cover their Faces and their Feet with their Wings in his Presence, and the holy Prophet cries out, *Woe is me, for I am undone, I am a Man of unclean Lips; mine Eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts.* *Esai. vi. 2—5.* Once have I spoken of myself (saith *Job*) to maintain my own Honours, yea twice, before I had seen God in his Glory; but now mine Eye has seen Thee, bebold I am vile, I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth, I lye down in profound Silence, I abhor myself and repent in Dust and Ashes. *Job xl. 4, 5. and xlii. 5, 6.* Live much therefore,

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fore, O my Soul, in the Views of God, the fairest and the first and the best of Beings : Live much in the Contemplation of *Christ* his Son, *in whom dwells all the Fullness of the Godhead bodily*, and who is the first and fairest Image of the Father. Thou canst never dare to swell and exalt thyself, thy little worthless self, in the Presence of such Majesty, in the Eye of such adorable and divine Excellencies.

S E C T. II.

*The Advantages of Humility in Regard of God.*

**B**UT it is Time to proceed to the second general Head of Discourse, (*viz.*) *What Advantages are to be derived from an Imitation of this Apostle this great Example of Humility*, What unknown Profit will arise from this holy Diminution or Lessening of Self?

Surely many and various will be the *Benefits* of such a pious Practice : Some with *Regard to God*, some with *Regard to our Neighbours*, and others with *Regard to our Selves*.

The *first Set of Advantages* that we shall derive from this Practice of Humility are *such as regard God and Religion*, and they may be thrown into the following Particulars.

I. We shall be kept ever dependent on Divine Providence and Grace for every Thing, while

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while we are deeply sensible of our own Emptiness, and we lye more directly under the Promises of Divine Supplies. While we feel that in and of our selves we are nothing, we shall be continually waiting upon God for every Blessing to be conveyed to us according to our Wants: we shall never think our selves sufficient for any Work, Duty or Difficulty without him, and we shall live upon him hourly for Light and Strength, for Grace and Comfort. *We are not sufficient of our selves,* says the Apostle, *to think one Thought as of our Selves, but our Sufficiency is of God.* 2 Cor. iii. 5. Humility and Dependence go together: Those who have high Thoughts of themselves are not so naturally inclined nor easily persuaded to trust in another. Psalm x. 4. *The Wicked through the Pride of his Heart will not seek after God.* But David as a Type of Christ in his State of Infirmary and Flesh, cries out, *I am a Worm and no Man.* Ps. xxii. 6. And therefore his Heart is ever *trusting in the Lord*: So St. Paul ever keeps his Hold of the Grace of God, and depends on the Strength of Christ, under a constant and prevailing Sense of his own Weakness. 2 Cor. xii. 10, *When I am weak then am I strong*: When I feel my own Weakness, I am strong by a Dependence on the Grace of Christ. A weak Christian and an Almighty Saviour are a sufficient Match for the most formidable Enemy: *My Grace, O Paul, is sufficient for thee against the Thorns of the Flesh and the Buffets of Satan,*  
The



The rich Gospel of Grace was only made for the Poor and the Humble among the Sons and Daughters of *Adam*. For whom is all that Fulness of Righteousness and Fulness of Grace treasur'd up in *Christ Jesus*, but for those who are deeply abased under a Sense of their own Guilt and Sinfulness? 'Tis for those who are dying and despairing in themselves that *Jesus* has brought in Hope and Life. We can never be Christians till we are thus humbled and brought to the Foot of God to receive all from his Son.

And remember, O my Soul, it is this Self-Poverty, this Emptiness and Dependence makes thee a prepared Vessel for the largest Communications of Divine Influence and Blessing. *Jesus* the Son of God came down from Heaven furnished with all Fulness of heavenly Graces, to bestow only upon the Poor and Needy and the depending Creature. He was sent to feed the Hungry, to clothe the Naked, *to heal the Sick*, to give Sight to the Blind, to bestow Wisdom upon the Ignorant, *to preach the Gospel to the Poor, and to call Sinners to Repentance* and Salvation; but the Self-Righteous, and the Wise, and the exalted haughty Things of this World, he hath no Blessings for them, for they are full of themselves, they do not feel nor imagine that they have any Need of his Bounty. The Doctrines and Benefits of his Gospel are *hid from the Wise, and the Mighty*, and the Sons of Pride; but they are revealed to Babes and conferred on the Poor.

The

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The humble Soul dwells nearest to the rich Treasures of Grace, and the empty Vessel is best prepared to receive the largest Communications.

What is it then, O my Heart, that should tempt thee to maintain high Thoughts of thy Self, of thy own Understanding, of thy own Sufficiency, when 'tis the ready Way to exclude thee from all the Aids of Divine Grace. *He hath filled the Hungry with good Things, but the Rich he hath sent empty away. God resisteth the Proud but giveth more Grace to the Humble.* Luke i. 53. Jam. iv. 6.

II. When we have low Thoughts of our Selves our Hearts and Lips will be full of Acknowledgments for the daily Favours of Grace and Providence. We shall take Notice of every favourable Dispensation that attends us, every Support and Relief of Divine Mercy which is communicated to us, and shall ascribe all to the free and rich Grace of God. Learn this Language, Oh my Soul, " I was sinking and  
 " drowning, and God *set my Feet upon a Rock,*  
 " *and established all my Goings:* I was wandering  
 " in foolish and pernicious Ways, running  
 " down to Destruction and Death, but the  
 " blessed God sent his Son from Heaven to seek  
 " and save me, and by the Voice of his Gospel and the secret Whispers of his Spirit he  
 " has directed my Feet into the Paths of Holiness and Peace and Life Eternal: I was  
 " sick and God healed me: I was in Trouble  
 " and

“ and the Lord relieved me : I was in Dark-  
 “ ness and he shed Light upon my Path : I  
 “ was in Streights and his Hand extricated me  
 “ out of them : I was on the very Borders of  
 “ Death and on the Verge of Hell, helpless  
 “ and hopeless in myself, but, Glory be to his  
 “ holy Name, he has given me Help and Hope  
 “ and Salvation.”

Such is the Language of the blessed *Paul*  
 1 Cor. xv. 10, 11. *I am nothing* in my self, and  
 if I appear to be any thing, *it is by the Grace*  
*of God I am what I am* : Holy *David* in his  
 Devotions is full of the same humble Acknow-  
 ledgments : *I was poor and needy, but thou hast*  
*been my Helper and my Strength*, I was sur-  
 rounded with Enemies, *thou hast been my Sal-*  
*vation* : This is the Sense of many of his Di-  
 vine Songs. And *who am I or what is my*  
*House that thou hast brought me hitherto ?*  
 1 Sam. vii. 18.

On the other Hand the Man who is full of  
 Self is ready to assume all the Honour of his  
 Success and his peaceful Circumstances to his own  
 Reason, to his own Wisdom, to the Diligence  
 and Strength of his own right Hand, or at  
 least to his own Merit of these Favours from  
 Heaven. He gives himself the Praise of the  
 Blessings that surround him : And if his Table  
 is spread plentifully from the Earth or from the  
 Waters, he ascribes that Plenty to his own  
 Skill, he *sacrifices to his own Net and burns In-*  
*cense to his own Drag*, as the Prophet expresses  
 it in a noble Metaphor. *Hab. i. 16.* And thus



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the God of Heaven is robb'd of his Honours, and the Praise is given to a Creature which is due to the Creator only: Thus the proud Man multiplies his Iniquities and commits Sacrilege and Idolatry at once.

III. Another Advantage of these humbling Thoughts of our Selves is this, that we shall bear with more Patience the afflicting Hand of God upon us, and wait longer for the Moment of Deliverance without murmuring. These self-abasing Sentiments under heavy Sorrows will incline us to confess, "*Lord, I have deserved them all,*" and will teach us to speak the Language of the Prophet *Micah*, Chapter vii. v. 9. *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, till he arise and plead my Cause.*

When, Oh my Soul, wilt thou learn this holy Behaviour? When wilt thou learn this humble Language? If the Lord bestow no temporal Blessings upon me, I lye at his Foot; he is not my Debtor, I deserve no Blessing from his Hands: If he take away Part of my Substance and my Wealth, I have deserved to be deprived of it all, for my Unprofitableness, for my earthly Mind, for my Vanity and the Pride of my Heart. If I have Food and Raiment I will therewith be content; it is much more than I have deserved. If I am Sick and in Pain, I would remember that I am guilty, and he *punishes less than my Iniquities deserve.* If I am stripped naked of my earthly Comforts,

Sect. II. *in Regard of God.* 19

forts, I resign them to his Disposal, I can claim none of them as my Merit, or as my Property; *the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away and blessed be the Name of the Lord.* He has done no more than he has Right to do with a worthless Worm, and I lye in the Dust before him waiting his good Pleasure. Such a Temper of Mind carries Peace and Serenity in it, not without some Glimpses of pious Hope and humble Expectation. *I will lay my Mouth in the Dust if so be there may be Hope* in the Grace of God, which loves to triumph over the Unworthiness of Creatures.

But let us now turn the Tables, and view the different Temper and Conduct of the Man who has high Thoughts of himself. When he is under the afflicting Stroke of Heaven he imagines he has deserved some better Treatment at the Hand of God, and though he dares not say this to his Maker's Face, yet the inward Vexation and Rage, the Disquietude and Resentment of his Heart under Afflictions, is such as would vent itself in loud Murmurs and Reproaches against Heaven if it durst: and because he dares not suffer his Passion and Fury to rise thus against his Creator, he gives it a Vent and lets loose his Impatience against every Creature that comes in his Way: Hence arises the impious Fretfulness and the tormenting Vexation of Spirit that haughty Persons feel under pressing Calamities; they throw their Fury all around them: their Impatience under the Hand of God is exprest by Peevish-

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ness toward Men: they make every one that is near them a Witness of that inward Indignation and Resentment, which they dare not directly aim at him that dwells on high. It is this rising Vanity, this fermenting and swelling Idea of Self that gives us ten-fold Agony and Smart when we are cast down and prest under the Hand of God. When we sustain Evils which we cannot remedy, we multiply and encrease their Load, and sharpen every Sting of Calamity by the Pride and Impatience of our own Spirits. God is affronted by us, Men grow weary of helping us, we enhance the Pain and Anguish of every Affliction, and we provoke the Hand of a holy and jealous God to keep us longer under the Weight of Sorrow, Sickness or Distress, till it has done his Work and prest down the Haughtiness of our Spirit.

IV. By diminishing Thoughts of our Selves we shall attain a nearer and greater Conformity to the Blessed *Jesus* the Son of God. What is there in all the Character of our dear Redeemer greater and more surprizing than his humble Temper and his humbled Estate? The Merit and Honour of his Humility and Lowliness are aggrandized and brightened by every glorious and divine Idea that enters into his Character. He is the *Brightness of his Father's Glory* and the *express Image of his Person*, yet he humbled himself to the *Form of a Man*, and to the *Likeness of sinful Flesh*: He is the  
Son



Sect. II. *in Regard of God.* 21

Son of God and *one with the Father*, yet he became the Son of Man and was born of a poor Virgin of the despicable Country of *Galilee*; and when he was a Man here upon Earth how did his meek and gentle and condescending Behaviour manifest his self-abasing Virtues? He *emptied himself* of the Splendors which he once possessed. Phil. ii. 6, 7. *He made himself of no Reputation* (as the *English* Translators have rendered it) and *being found in Fashion as a Man* he behaved like a fellow-Creature, a Friend and a Brother, though he was really superior to Angels and one with God, though his Name was *God with us* and his Character was *God manifest in the Flesh*. See what sort of Inference the Apostle makes from such a View of our blessed Lord? v. 3, 4, 5. *Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-Glory, but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every Man on his own Things, i. e. with a self-flattering and exalted Survey of them, but let every Man also look on the Things of others, paying all due Regard to their real Worth and Dignity. Let this Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* Indeed there is no Possibility of lessening our selves comparably to the Self-abasement of the Son of God; and yet the nearer we are like him the more shall we partake of the Father's Love, and we shall be in the Way of Divine Advancement, in a humble Imitation of the Advancement of Christ himself: *Because he humbled himself to Death, therefore*  
God

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*God hath highly exalted him and given him a Name above every Name.*

V. By a humble Opinion of our Selves, and by a lowly Conduct and Behaviour in Life we shall bring Honour to the Gospel, and become the truest Ornaments to the Divine Religion which we profess. Never was any Religion founded in so much Humility as that of the Gospel: The first Principle of it requires that we be sensible of our own Guilt and Sinfulness, our Danger and Misery, and our utter Insufficiency to relieve our selves: and in the Progress it shews us to derive all the Good which we have and hope for from the free Mercy of God through a Mediator. The first Line of that excellent Sermon which *Jesus* the Author of the Gospel preach'd to his People upon the Mountain, is this, *Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Matth. v. 3. Blessed are those who have the lowest and meanest Thoughts of themselves, for the heavenly Treasures of Divine Grace are particularly offered to them, and they are most ready to receive them. It is the very Design of the Gospel to *stain the Glory of all Flesh, and to hide Pride from Man*, to teach Man that he is nothing, and that he has nothing in and of himself, *that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.* 1 Cor. i. 29, 31. Now the Man that keeps these self-abasing Virtues, and maintains a humbling Sense of his own Nothingness in himself, and his universal Dependence upon

upon the Grace of *Christ*, does acceptable Honour to the Gospel which he professes, and makes it appear in its own proper and Divine Light.

## S E C T. III.

*The Advantages of Humility in Regard of Men.*

**A**S Humility towards God is a necessary Qualification of every Christian, so humble Thoughts of our Selves in Regard of our fellow-Creatures belong to the Profession and Character of this Gospel: For what have I to boast of above my Brother, when we are all under the Sentence of common Condemnation before God, all guilty and miserable in his Sight, and are all intirely indebted to his free and rich Mercy for every Degree of Excellency or Advantage that we possess? *What hast thou, Oh my Soul, that thou hast not received? why dost thou then glory and look big upon thy Fellows as though thou hast not received it? who is it that hath made thee to differ from another?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Oh what a Dishonour does it bring upon the Gospel of *Christ* when one who takes upon him the Christian Name exalts himself into Conceit and Vanity, and swells in his own Opinion of himself, when he sets himself on high above his Brethren and looks down upon them with



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with Haughtiness and Scorn? Can such a Wretch be a Christian, while he is a Reproach to the Christian Name, and has not the first Principle of Christianity, has nothing of the Temper or Spirit of the Gospel in him?

But some of these Thoughts lead me to the *second Rank of Advantages which may be derived from low and humble Thoughts of our Selves*, and these are such as *regard our Neighbours or fellow-Creatures*. And the first of them is this.

I. If we have a mean Opinion of Self, we shall pay due Esteem and Honour to every Thing that is valuable in other Men, and not scorn and despise every Body around us, as though they were not worthy to be named the same Day with our Selves: nor shall we be so imperious and haughty in our Behavior even where God has given some Degrees of Superiority.

Perhaps we plume our Selves with the Honours of our Ancestors and look down with Disdain upon those whose Family is of a lower Rank than ours. But a Grain of Wisdom will put us in mind that the Honours of Birth are no certain Evidences of Virtue or Merit: There may be some high-born Animals with sorry and scoundrel Souls, and some who drew their first Breath in a Cottage, Strangers to Title and Quality, whose Eminencies are bright and shining. Add a Grain of Humility, and it will teach us that all Families were one in *Adam* the first Man, when our Blood ran in his Veins: We are all made of one common Earth;

Earth; we are but the same coarse Materials, the same Clay moulded up into the Form of Man; let this dwell upon the Heart and we shall not carry it so disdainfully to our kindred-Clods, nor look down with such Scorn upon any of our earthly Brethren, our fellow-Worms, because of those accidental Advantages of which we imagine our selves possessed.

Or perhaps we fall into Company that are unpolish'd and unbred, they carry rustick Airs about them while we have got a few Forms of Behaviour, and we publish our Scorn of them to shew our Breeding. Foolish Insolence and preposterous Vanity which the Well-bred and Polite are never guilty of! But tell me, Man, how long hast thou learnt thy genteel and elegant Behaviour, these Arts and Forms of boasted Decency? Canst thou not remember the Time when thy Gait, and thy Mein, thy Speech and all thy Airs were almost as aukward and uncouth as the very Creature thou deridest? And wouldst thou have been willing to have had thy former Aukwardnesses made the Ridicule of the Company? Couldst thou so well bear to have been the Jest of the Man above thee, that thou spendest thy Jests so freely upon one who is the very Figure of what thou hast been? Hast thou not Humility, nor Prudence, nor Goodness enough to remember this?

Or perhaps thou art drest finer and art a Favourite among the Great: But is this sufficient Reason to scorn the Poor? Remember also that he is thy Brother by Nature: Naked and cast

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out of the Favour of God together with thee: All Sons and Daughters of *Adam* the great Sinner, all by Nature *Children of Wrath*, *Strangers* to the Blessed God, Outcasts of Paradise, and averse to all that is holy: And if we behold our selves in this State, what is there in one little Lump of this wretched and polluted Mass of Human Nature, that it should exalt itself upon any little Pretences over the rest of the Mass, wherein it lay in common Pollution and Wretchedness?

Or if we hope that we are called and sanctified and become the Children of God, who was it made the Difference? Was it not the free Mercy of God that called us and wrought the Divine Change in us? What is there for us to boast of? Let us allow those who we think are yet uncalled and unchanged by Grace all the natural Excellencies and moral Qualifications that belong to them, and not sully and darken the Evidences of our own Christianity by a haughty and scornful Carriage toward our Neighbours.

Let us remember yet further, that many others are called and renewed and sanctified as well as we, and perhaps have brighter Evidences of their Graces, and bear up the Character of the Children of God with more Honour than we do: And we should think so too if our Pride and Conceit would but suffer us to see their shining Virtues, their exalted Piety. If we could but maintain such Thoughts as these we should not assume such haughty Airs, such



such Insolence of Language over our fellow Worms, that are crept out of the same Bed of Meanness and Defilement, and some of them perhaps have a larger Share of Purifying Grace than our selves.

Or had I but a due Degree of Self-abasement, how swift and ready should I be to spy out the Virtues which my Neighbour possesses, and to pay due Honour to all his valuable Qualifications; even as the Proud, the Envious and the Malicious Spirits are ready to spy out the Blemishes of their Fellows and to expose them.

It is the Voice of the humble Man concerning his poor Neighbour, "Though he may not  
 " have so much of this World as God has  
 " given to me, yet perhaps he has a larger  
 " and fairer Interest in the Inheritance on  
 " high: he may not have such a large Ac-  
 " quaintance with human Sciences because he  
 " has not had the Advantages which I have in-  
 " joyed, but perhaps he is richer in Grace, and  
 " has laid up a better Treasure against a Day  
 " to come. It may be he is not so much ac-  
 " quainted with Courts and Palaces, he has  
 " little to do with Chariots and Horses and  
 " rich Equipage, but perhaps he is more ac-  
 " quainted with God, oftener at the Gates of  
 " Heaven, and nearer akin to the Spirits made  
 " perfect, to the Saints and Angels on high."  
 Thus he prefers his Neighbour in the Honours of the invisible World, while in all Things visible he is much superior to him: Thus he fulfils the Advice of St. Paul to the *Philippians*,

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Chap. ii. 3. and in *Lowliness of Mind esteems others better than himself.*

Such a happy Spirit as this reigning within us will utterly forbid us to fall in with a Word of Scandal when 'tis going current round the Room : A wretched but a common Crime ! Humble Souls ever carry about them such a constant Sense of their own Defects and Follies that they dare not help onward the flying Reproach. They find so many Errors in their own Lives that they cannot dwell with Delight on the Blemishes of their fellow Mortals. An inward Consciouness and Shame blushes in their Bosoms, and imposes Silence upon their Lips : Or perhaps Compassion awakens them to make some Apology for the absent Sufferer, or to strike the Scandal dead with a Word of just Reproof.

If we have a low Opinion of our selves, our Eyes will never acquire the disdainful Cast, nor learn the scornful Airs of those who are full of Self. Our Lips will never assume the haughty Tone and the insolent Language of the proud in Heart. *Speak not (say they) for I am present : Answer not when I give my Opinion : Do what I require, be silent and dumb : Do you not know who it is commands you ? Go from my Presence, it is not fit I should be seen in your Company, you have neither Dress nor Manners fit to appear.* So the haughty Hypocrites in the Days of *Isaiah* the Prophet, *Stand by thy self for I am holier and better than thou.* *Esaï. lxxv. 5.*

Where

Sect. III. *in Regard of Men.* 29

Where the Eyes and the Lips have learnt these disdainful and imperious Airs, it is exceeding hard to unlearn them. A Peacock may almost as soon be untaught to spread his gay Feathers, or the Seas and the Winds untaught to swell and roar, as a Man full of *Self* to put off his Insolence, to stand upon a Level with his Fellows, and to treat those about him with Affability and Candour.

Watch, Oh my Soul, against the first secret Motions of Vanity: when thy inward Thoughts begin to swell and thy Heart to exalt itself, watch against every haughty Air, against the high Look and the scornful Tone; watch and subdue the earliest Workings of Pride; for if they gain but a little Indulgence and Strength, all the Powers of thy Reason will not be able to subdue them, and they will create thee long and heavy Toil to gain the Victory after many sore Vexations of Spirit.

II. If we have low Thoughts of our selves we shall be thankful for every Design of Kindness which our Neighbours express towards us, nor shall we scorn the good Offices of the meanest, though perhaps we can receive little or no Advantage by them. God the Glorious and the Sublime, who inhabits Eternity and dwells above the Praises of his highest Angels, looks down upon the Heart of every humble Worshipper here on Earth, and receives our little worthless Services with a Smile of Approbation: *If there be a willing Mind the Gift is accepted*



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accepted according to what the Giver is able to offer; nor are the *two Mites of a Widow* neglected or disdained in the Treasury of our God. 2 Cor. viii. 12. Luke xxi. 2. Remember, Oh my Heart, the Divine Example, and be an Imitator of the blessed God in this Respect, who made thee to wear his own Image. But mark how the haughty Man who is full of Self receives the Offers of Kindness from his Inferior. He scarce vouchsafes to cast an Eye upon them unless it be in Scorn: Thus he upbraids his Neighbour with his Poverty: he treats his humble Civilities with Contempt, and despises all his Good-will: Merit and Modesty blush and sink down before him, and die under his Frowns. O vile Idea of a haughty Scornor who puts Modesty to the Blush and lets Merit die.

III. The humble Man who has low Thoughts of himself is beloved of Men as well as of God, and gains the Favour of all around him. He remembers that it is *of one Blood God has made all Nations*, and he is moulded of the same Dust with his Fellows, and he thinks rather of those Essentials of human Nature wherein he lyes upon a Level with the meanest Son of *Adam*, than of those accidental Differences of Wit or Wealth which have raised him above some of his Fellows. He knows that others have a Right to some Degrees of Love and Esteem as well as himself, they have some Pretence to Understanding and Merit as well as he.

If

If the Poor and the Ignorant ask him a Question, though it be an impertinent one, he does not turn short upon them with a smart and surly Speech, nor turn away with disdainful Silence: He makes the Child and the Servant love him by the soft and friendly Answer he gives even to their needless Queries. His Behaviour to his Inferiors has something in it so engaging, that there's not the meanest Figure of Mankind goes from his Presence without a pleasing Image of his Goodness left upon their Minds.

When he comes into Company with his Equals, he does not seize the Dictator's Chair, nor affect to shew himself in any superior Forms. He comes to learn rather than to instruct, and not only gives others leave to speak in their Turn, but he hears their Opinion with Patience and Pleasure, and pays due Deference to all the Appearances of Reason in their Discourse, though he may sometimes happen to prefer his own Sentiment. He is not fond of ingrossing the Talk to himself, nor of filling up the Hour of Conversation with hearing his own Discourse, or speaking his own Praises: He limits the Motions of his Tongue, he pays to every one the Rights of Society, and he enjoys the Esteem and Love of all. Humility carries in it all the sincere Arts of Complaisance, and is the shortest Way to form and accomplish the Man of Breeding.

But a swelling haughty Creature is a hateful Thing. Insolence of Heart and Tongue are for-

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forbidding Qualities. *A proud Look is an Abomination to the Lord*, and an abhor'd Thing amongst Men. *Prov. xvii. 6.* Such Persons may be feared but they are never loved: they may have many Cringes and Compliments paid to them by their Neighbours, but they have no Room in their Esteem, no Place in their Heart. *Prov. xxiv. 9.* *A Scornor is an Abomination to Men*: he that takes this Road to Grandeur widely mistakes his Way, for he often ruins his Interest instead of advancing it. And if he should happen to arrive at Greatness he leaves behind him the more vertuous and tastful Pleasures of Friendship and Love: If he could but hear with what Contempt and Hatred he is treated behind his Back, he would indure much Anguish of Soul with inward Shame and lasting Vexation: And 'tis pity but he should hear it sometimes, to punish at least if not to cure his Insolence.

Has divine Providence raised me to any accidental Degrees of Elevation above my Neighbours, let my Heart seek their Love rather than their Fear: Let me find proper Seasons to place myself as it were upon a Level with them with all due and condescending Decency, and thus let me seek and obtain the Esteem and hearty Benevolence of Mankind, and particularly of those whom Providence has placed beneath me. There is an Art of bearing up one's highest Character and Dignity amongst Men without the haughty Airs, the exalted Eyebrow and the insolent Tone of Voice.



IV. Low and humble Thoughts of our Selves will teach us to bear the Admonition of our Friends with a gentler Temper, and receive the Blessing with a Return of Thankfulness: we shall sustain the Reproaches of our Enemies also with a greater Calm of Soul, and stand the rudest Shock of Calumny with a more steady Patience.

What is it but the Pride of our Hearts, and the great and sacred Image which we frame of our SELVES, that makes us so hasty to resent the softest Admonition of a Friend? Our Hearts and Lips stand always ready prest to vindicate our whole Conduct, and sometimes we let loose our Fire and Thunder on a sudden upon those who give us the most friendly Rebuke. SELF is our shining Idol, and no Man must dare to suppose there is any Blemish or Spot upon it. Therefore we repay the kindest Advice with railing, and revile Men for the greatest Benefit they can bestow upon us. We form so innocent and so venerable an Idea of our Selves, we fancy our beloved Selves to be so wise, so unblameable and perfect, that we cannot endure to hear or suspect there are any Failings belonging to us, and we resent it as an high Offence when they are pointed out to us by the gentlest Hand. We are jealous of every Thing that opposes our Opinion, that censures our Conduct, or in the most friendly Language discovers our Mistakes: Passion and Resentment are ever upon the Watch and stand ready to take the Alarm; the Eyes and the Tongue are swift to discover

### 34 *Advantages of Humility* Sect. III.

the inward Ferment, to publish and betray the Pride of the Heart. O that each of us would but honestly enquire, *Is this my Picture? Are these the Features of my Soul? Do I ever wear this Aspect, or assume these Airs?* But alas, which of us, O my Friends, is entirely innocent and blameless here? How few Follies had any of us carried into aged Life, if we had not had too much Pride and Self-flattery to invite and encourage the Admonitions of our Acquaintance, who saw these budding Fooleries in younger Years? But we were too rich, or too wise, or too vain to bear a Reprover; and thus our Vices are grown up with us to shame our grey Hairs, and are now too much mingled with our Natures ever to be rooted out.

While we maintain this Temper of Mind 'tis no Wonder we cannot bear the ruder Reproaches of the World, nor confine our selves in that dangerous Moment within any Bounds of Sobriety or Patience. We kindle on a sudden into undue Rage, we swell and burn with inward Indignation and indulge our Lips in a wild Revenge: Or sometimes perhaps the Pride of our Souls mingled with a particular Constitution of Body sinks under the Assaults of Scandal with a shameful Cowardise, and almost dies with Abjectness of Spirit; for Courage is not always an Attendant upon Pride: The vain Man is not always a Hero.

Oh unhappy Creature, that is thus galled inwardly with every Stroke of the Tongues of Men! that vexes and frets its own Peace away  
for

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for want of due Honours from the World! All the Comforts and Blessings of Life are insipid or dis-relishing, all the Grandeur of Circumstances, the Sun-shine of Heaven and the Gaiety of the Seasons have no Power to relieve or support us. The Soul of *Hamah* amidst all his Honours of State and his endless Treasures is still pining away with inward Vexation, and his Life languishes from Day to Day, because *Mordecai* does not rise up to him and pay his Compliments.

Have a Care, Oh my Soul, of copying after this wretched Character: have a Care of swelling to these painful Dimensions of Pride, lest thou render all the Comforts of Life tasteless for want of some little Punctilio of Honour which the World will not pay thee. Look upon thy self as a weak Mortal, as a Creature capable of Mistake and Folly; this Thought will keep the Avenues of thy Soul ever free and open for the Counsels and Warnings of thy Friends, and make a kind and faithful Admonition as welcome as a Word of vain Applause. And even when Enemies reproach thee, thou wilt be suspicious of thy Self whether thou hast not deserved the Reproach: thou wilt make a fresh Scrutiny into thy own Heart, and inquire there in secret, what real Truth may be mingled with the unjust Revilings of Men: and thus thou wilt be powerfully awaken'd to subdue every Vice, to abandon every Folly that tarnishes thy Character, and make use of the rough Language of a malici-



### 36 *Advantages of Humility* Sect. III.

ous World to burnish thy Virtues and to keep them ever shining.

V. The lower Esteem we have of our selves the more easily shall we be pleased with Persons and Things round about us: we shall be more unmoved at the little Accidents of Life which may happen to cross our Humour, and we shall rather pity than terrify those who chance to displease us where the Will was not in it. What is it that fires our Resentment at every little Mistake or supposed Mistake of those that attend on us? What is it rouses our angry Passions at every real or fancied Mifcarriage of those with whom we converse? What is the Spring of all this Tumult of Soul, this inward Disturbance, but the vain and exalted Idea which we have conceived of our selves? as though we must be exempted from the common Laws and Incidents of our frail and mortal State?

Let us colour over our Guilt with the kindest Salvo's, yet 'tis a certain Truth, Pride and Passion are near a kin, and they are most times joyn'd together in the Temper of Men and in the Conduct of Life: Passion and Pride are thus united in the Descriptions of Sin and in the Rules of Duty both in the Books of Morality and in the Language of Scripture. Prov. xxi.

24. *Proud and haughty Scorners is his Name who dealeth in proud Wrath.* Prov. xiii. 10. *Only by Pride cometh Contention.* Indulge the one and you support the other: Subdue the

one

one and the other is in a great Measure prevented or suppressed.

Indeed a Man will much sooner confess his *Passion* than his *Pride*: You will hear him sometimes acknowledging to his Friend, "It is the Frailty of my Nature, this cursed Passion! I am of a warm and hasty Temper: May God and Man forgive me!" But you scarce ever hear him say, "This Pride is my Folly, this Pride is my secret Iniquity." Yet I was once acquainted with a Christian of a hasty and passionate Temper who has many Years since left his Frailties in the Grave, and he would confess with Freedom and with a becoming Sense of his Sin, that there was no Passion without some Degrees of Pride.

VI. If we maintain a mean Opinion of our selves we shall be much more ready to practise Benevolence in a disinterested Manner, and to deny our selves for the Conveniency of those about us: We shall not be ever projecting to exalt and gratify Self, nor shall we think it so hard or painful a Thing, to be put out of our own Way and our Course a little, and abate of our own Convenience in some Instances in order to give some greater Conveniency to our Friends.

*Self-denial* is one of the first Lessons in the School of *Christ*. Matth. xvi. 24. *If any Man will come after me let him deny himself: We must learn to mortify our own Humour if we would be approved of Christ or beloved of Men.*

The

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The proud and haughty Man is generally so selfish that he can never love his Neighbour as he ought to love him, because his Opinion of *Self* rises so high as to deserve and engross all his kind Affections. Let him make what Pretences he will to Friendship and Goodness; let him labour in Works of Beneficence and feed the Hungry and clothe the Naked, yet in all his Schemes, Contrivances and Labours he has still some secret Design for his beloved *Self*: As his Imagination swells with this dear Idea, so his Wishes and Projects are ever full of it, even when he would fain appear to practise a disinterested Zeal for the Good of others.

If *Self* and what belongs to *Self* is well, all is well: If *Self* and Family be rich and happy, all is right; the Man is tolerably easy: But if any Thing cross his Purposes and the Wishes and Humours of his Heart, nothing is right, nothing is well: His Complaints shall be heard aloud and the Man can find no Rest.

Oh if we could but keep down this dear *SELF* from reigning, we should not be so narrow-spirited and begin and end our Projects in the little Circle of *Self*: We should not fret and storm at every Thing that interrupts our Pleasures or that interferes with our present Designs: We should not rise up in Fury nor be lavish of our loud Reproaches against every Thing that disturbs our Ease or our Indolence. We shall not then think our selves worthy of such Honour and Reverence, as though every Thing about us must be made to submit to  
our



our Purposes, and yield to our Humours. We shall be content to permit others to have some Inclinations, some Desires, some Conveniences, as well as our selves; and not imagine that the World was made only for our Pleasure, nor even the inferior Parts of it merely to obey us. 'Tis only the good and the humble Man who tastes Satisfaction in the Welfare of his Inferiors, who relishes the Pleasures of his Fellow-Creatures, and he feels a real and sincere Delight to see every one around him made cheerful and easy, though sometimes it may be at the Expence of his own Ease and Convenience. These are Joys which Pride has never tasted.

The Man of haughty Thoughts and Airs has very little Acquaintance with the Golden Rule of Equity that our Saviour has given us, *to deal with others as we desire them to deal with us.* He scarce ever concerns himself to reflect how tenderly he would wish to be treated, if he were in the Place of those whom he treats so rudely. His Pride will not suffer him so much as to suppose himself there. He does not ask himself, "How would this Disdain, this overbearing Insolence, this Disturbance and Disappointment fit upon my Heart if my Neighbour treated me in this Manner?" Surely no Mortal would resent it more painfully than himself; and yet he is utterly regardless what Pain he gives to his Fellow-Creatures by this his scornful Behaviour. He may call himself a *Christian*, but I know not who will believe him, while he makes it appear to  
all

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all Men that he has nothing to do with that divine Rule of *Love* which our blessed Saviour borrowed from *Moses* and gave it to all his Followers: *Love thy Neighbour as thy Self.*

When I feel my Self impatient of the least Disappointment, when I take no Thought to make my Neighbour easy, but grow furiously zealous to maintain my own Humour at the Expence of the Ease or the Conveniency of all about me, how unlike am I to the blessed *Jesus*, who had a nobler SELF than any meer Creature; and yet he denied it, even in the tenderest Instances of Reputation and of Life itself for the Good of his People? Rom. xv. 3. Whence St. *Paul* derives this holy Inference, Verse 1, 2. *We then that are strong ought to bear the Infirmities of the weak and not to please our selves: but let every one of us please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification: for even Christ pleased not himself.* And the blessed Apostle has added his own Character to confirm and enforce this Practice of Virtue and Goodness. 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. *I have made my self a Servant to all that I might gain the more: To the weak I became as weak that I might win their Souls: I am made all Things to all Men, that I might by all Means save some; and this I do, that I may be Partaker of the Blessings of the Gospel together with you.* Oh happy Souls, in whom this humble and holy Temper prevails! Happy souls indeed, who are so dear to God, so much akin to Christ and so zealous of the Peace and Happiness of Men!

S E C T. IV.

*The Advantages of Humility with Regard to our Selves.*

**T**HUS I have finished the *second Rank of Advantages* derived from a low Esteem of our Selves (*viz.*) Those which *relate to our fellow Creatures*. I come now to consider in the *last Place* what are the *Advantages of this Virtue with Regard to our Selves, to our own Improvement and Happiness.*

I. We shall not be so positive and rooted in all our own Opinions, nor so incapable of discerning or rectifying our Mistakes. 'Tis of considerable Importance to a fallible Creature to know that he is liable to a Mistake as well as his Fellows, that he may search out and correct his Errors: But the Man who is full of Self is never mistaken: He has no Opinion to be dropt or altered, no Retractation to make: Rash as he is, yet he has no Errors to be corrected in his own Esteem, and therefore he lives and dies in full Possession of many Falshoods and in the daily Practice of many Follies. Pride is one Vice but it supports a hundred.

What is it but the over-weening Conceit of our being wiser and better than others that renders us constantly so tenacious of all our Opinions, and deaf to all further Enquiries



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and Reasonings? What is it makes us set up for Dictators to the World with so much frontless Assurance, and fix our own Sentiments as a Test and Standard of Truth? All the learned Sciences and the Affairs of common Life, Trade and Politicks, Mechanic Arts, Poesy and Morals, are the daily Subjects of these infallible Declaimers both at the Table, and the Coffee-house, and in private Visits, and yet more eminently at the Tavern: There indeed the Wine brightens every Idea into Truth, it raises the Courage and the Voice together, and establishes every Man triumphant in his own Opinion. The vain Creature knows all Things.

But one would think that the sacred and sublime Topicks of Religion should be treated with a more doubtful and ingenuous Modesty; especially where the holy Writers themselves are not very express and positive in their Determinations. One would think there should be some Abatements to our Confidence, and that we might sometimes speak with a holy Fear and Suspicion of our Understandings in Points of the most abstruse and divine Argument, where wise and good Men have often been divided. Alas for our Pride and Folly! for our wretched Ignorance and our shameful Conceit! Let *Mr. Baxter* who was a Man of great Sagacity and a wise Observer of human Nature set it before us in this admirable Tetrastick, wherein the Verses are superior to many of their Neighbours.

*We*

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*We croud about a little Spark,  
Learnedly striving in the Dark,  
Never more bold than when most blind,  
And we run fastest when the Truth's behind.*

But we are generally too wise to tread one Step back again though it be to lay hold on the Truth which we have out-run in our Haste to Assurance. We have sometimes found it in our selves and observed it in others that the Firmness of a pretended Orthodoxy has not been always derived from Light and Evidence: Want of Humility in the Heart is too often the Reason why we have no want of Confidence in our Opinions, whether they be true or false. The boldest and most peremptory Assertions are no Criteria of Truth: nor are they always the Result of a sincere and unbiass Examination, but the Fruit of our own Conceit and of the high Esteem of our own Understandings: We are sure we have been in the Right even from our early Years, or at least from the Day of Manhood, and we desire to be no wiser, nor can any Man make us so.

It is granted there may be some Subjects that we have searched to the Bottom, we have seen them through and through; and by much Labour and Argument we are able to pronounce upon them with just Assurance. This may be allowed sometimes even to a wise and a modest Speaker: But what is it, my Friends, that emboldens the Bulk of Mankind to talk with such a decisive Air upon all manner of Themes

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as they do when they have read or studied almost nothing of the Matter? Hast thou found out, O Man, every Truth in the Heights and the Depths, and known every secret Thing so well as to be incapable of mistaking? What inspires thee to dictate as though thou only wert the *Man of Knowledge*, and *Wisdom* must die with thee? What is it but Vanity and Fullness of Self that gives any Man such assuming Airs and such an over-bearing Manner in Conversation, that others must not be suffer'd to speak, while he must be heard with Silence and Attention? Nor is Silence and Attention enough without a submissive Faith. If you dare to doubt of what the Tongue of Pride pronounces, you dare to be impudent in his Opinion, and he is ready to tell you so to your Face. What is it else but this inward Arrogance that casts a scornful Eye on any one in the Company who dares to offer at an Argument against his Positions? And a contemptuous Scoff is thought sufficient to refute the noblest Reasoning. What is it but Pride and a domineering Spirit that tempts any Man to oblige others to bind their Understandings and their Consciences for ever down to every Punctilio of his own Opinions, and reverence every Sentence as though the Pen of divine Truth had written them? Happy had it been for the *Christian* World if this assuming and imposing Spirit had never been found, but only and always on the *Heretical* Side! Then we should have had a more evident and distinguish'd  
Token



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Token where to seek for Truth, that is, where this Pride and Tyranny of Souls had no Place. But alas, this is a vain and fruitless Wish! Every Nation of *Christendom* has felt the Infection and the Mischief. Even the old Idol at *Rome* with all his Infallibility and Thunder could scarcely demand more Sovereignty over our Belief than the positive Men of our Age even in the Land of Liberty.

What is it but our Pride that breaks in upon the Discourse of many a wiser Person than our selves? We are impatient to set forth our own Talent of talking, and at the same time to publish our Arrogance and Shame, and perhaps our Nonsense too. Truth and Merit are often modest while Ignorance and Folly sound their Trumpet, and the Brass will make itself heard while Gold and Jewels shine in Silence.

What is it but this Fulness of SELF that makes Persons so unable to bear the least Contradiction, even in the common Affairs of Life? They grow pale with Anger or kindle into Rage when any of their Sentiments are opposed; they feel the inward Ferment working and boiling up when their Neighbour dares to be of another Mind: And 'tis seldom that they have Power or Inclination to conceal their Resentment: It generally boils over at their Lips and betrays the secret Fire. Some passionate Speech, some wrathful Word or other breaks from their Tongue and gives Notice of their Impatience and high Displeasure. What is all this but the Fruit of Pride and Self-sufficiency? If

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If Men had a lower Esteem of themselves they would not always maintain such a full Assurance that Truth and Justice are ever on their Side. By this assuming Behaviour they forbid all Instruction, they stop all the Avenues of Reason and Knowledge, by which further Light might enter into their Souls and rectify any mistaken Sentiment. There is no Man lies so far out of the Road of Illumination and true Wisdom as he that is already very sure his Opinions are all Sun-beams. Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seest thou a Man wise in his own Conceit, there is more Hope of a Fool than of him.*

It is with a secret Pleasure and inward Esteem that I have often read those four Lines which that excellent Man Dr. John Owen wrote under his own Effigies.

*Umbra refert fragiles dederint quas Cura Dolorque  
Reliquias, Studiis assiduusque Labor.*

*Mentem humilem sacri servantem Limina Veri  
Votis supplicibus Qui dedit, Ille videt.*

Which may be rendered thus in English.

*This Shadow shews the frail Remains  
Of Care and Grief and studious Pains.  
The Mind in humble Posture waits  
A suppliant at Truth's sacred Gates,  
To find some Gleams of Light appear,  
And He that gave it, sees it there.*

What an Elegance of Humility lyes couch'd  
in

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in the last Line, as it were retired from the Eye of Man, and seen to God only.

But let not any of us imagine that a Sub-  
scription to his Doctrines of Grace, or a zealous  
Vindication of his most evangelical Op-  
inions is a sufficient Proof of a humble Spirit.

We may depress and even nullify the Pride and  
Power of fallen Man with a Spirit of Pride  
and Self-sufficiency. So *Diogenes* the *Cynick*  
or dogged Philosopher is said to have set his  
dirty Feet upon some fine Furniture of *Plato's*  
Bed, and then he boasted himself that he had  
sunk down and humbled the Pride of *Plato*.

Yes, replied the more civil Philosopher, and  
that with a greater Load of Pride. We may  
talk of our own Vileness and Nothingness with  
haughty and vain-glorious Language, and de-  
fend the most self-abasing Doctrines of the Gos-  
pel with an arrogant and imperious Temper.  
Give me the Man that lays Nature low before  
God under a living Sense and Consciousness of  
its Guilt and Wretchedness and Impotence;  
who appears to feel every Word that he speaks,  
and his Style and his Airs are all as humble as  
his divine Doctrine represents him. It is possi-  
ble for us to take the Language of Heaven upon  
our Lips with a Hell of Fire and Pride in our  
Hearts, and support even Truth itself with in-  
tolerable and shameful Haughtiness.

II. As a low Esteem of Self will help us a-  
gainst many Errors of the Mind, so it will  
guard us against the Follies of the *Humourist*,

mob

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which



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which are a Vice of the *Will*. The wise and lowly Mind has very few *Humours* or unreasonable Inclinations, and therefore he feels but little Vexation or Disquietude: He can conform himself to present Circumstances without Pain, there is no Difficulty to please him, he finds an easy Chair in every Room of his House. 'Tis the Humorist that creates perpetual Vexation to himself as well as to all around him: You must watch as for your Life, if you would never offend him, you must be observant of all his Motions and comport with every Notice of his Pleasure: You can hardly move or speak, but you speak or move amiss: and if you would correct your Mistake by doing the reverse of what you did before, this may be quite wrong also, and 'tis scarce possible for you to be in the right. So difficult, so tiresome, so impracticable a Thing it is to please these vain Animals, these pettish or wayward Creatures, these everlasting Children, which are grown to the Size of Men and Women.

Methinks I hear them disdain the Name of *Child* and resent my Description: But let them go on with their Disdain and Resentment, and swell with their own manly Idea: Yet let them know that till they put off these childish and humorous Behaviours, they are but Infants in longer Garments, with all that high Opinion and that overgrown Esteem they have of themselves. They must begin their Education again and unlearn these Follies, if ever they would find sincere Honour among Men of Wisdom

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dom and Goodness. What Claim, what Pre-  
tence has that Man to the Esteem and Love  
of Men whose Conduct is insupportable to all  
those who converse or dwell with him? And  
what is it but the vast and vain Idea he has of  
himself, that tempts him to suppose, his Will  
must be the absolute Rule of Duty and Sub-  
mission to all who are near him or concern'd  
with him?

Let such Persons declaim against Tyranny  
as often and as loud as they please, and argue  
upon the Theme with much Wit and Reason;  
let them talk of Liberty and Slavery in philo-  
sophical and just Discourses, and appear the  
most forward and zealous Patrons of the Free-  
dom of Mankind, yet if they were exalted to  
a Throne they would be very Tyrants, and  
the World around them must be all their Slaves.  
Native Vice and inbred Iniquity would prevail  
even above their own good Reasonings, and  
mould their Practice into that absolute Sove-  
reignty and Dominion which their own Mind  
and Conscience must ever condemn, and which  
their own Lips at special Seasons have so plen-  
tifully and so justly exposed.

This is sufficiently evident by their Conduct  
wheresoever they happen to have Power: They  
are already little Tyrants in their own little  
Dominions, and if they have but one Inferior  
belongs to them he shall know and feel that  
they are Lords and Masters. If their Will be  
cross'd in some common Affair of Life their  
loud Complaints shall break out at the Win-

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dows and the Doors: The Walls of the House shall echo with the Sound of their Indignation; till the Neighbours are alarm'd and enquire into the domestick Mischief. You shall see these Sons of Humour rise from their Table in a Fury and renounce their Food: The Breast swells with inward Passion and leaves no Room for the Refreshments of Nature: The Servants fly scattering into Corners for Fear: The Peace of their dearest Relatives is broken, the Order of the Family thrown into wild Confusion, and the Tempest rises so high in their own Bosom, that it will require some Hours to calm and compose it. Pride and Humour have raised a Storm, and 'tis no small Labour to reduce the Passions to Peace, to smoothe all the Billows that roar and roll within, and to make the Countenance serene again.

And after all, what is the Cause of this Tumult? what gross and unpardonable Crime gave Occasion for such Resentment and Violence? Perhaps Dinner was not set upon the Table exactly at the appointed Moment, the Clock has struck five Minutes and the Table is not cover'd; or it may be the Cook has not perform'd her Part to such a precise Degree of Nicety and Elegance as the Master expected, or as the Mistress had taught her. *This Dish is so insipid and season'd so low, 'tis impossible to eat it, and the other is nothing but Salt and Fire.* 'Tis strange that for both these Reasons the Passions must burn and the Heart broil with Fury: *What? shall I never be gratified at my own Table?*



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*ble?* On'tis frosty Weather, and the Plates are not quite warm enough, and therefore the Master kindles; *Must I still be serv'd so? Have ye all conspir'd that I shall eat a cold Dinner to Day?* And yet this Man professes to be a Philosopher, a Man of Virtue; he disdains to be led by that mean and brutal Thing call'd *Appetite*, and talks much of *subduing the Passions*. I wish he could but suppose he had any to be subdued.

Or perhaps a Word is inadvertently spoken in the Dining-room which used to be forbidden there; perhaps some grave and serious Theme is started in a jovial Hour, or some innocent Mirth at another Time is thought to be unseasonably introduced. Let the Cause be what it will, the Ear receives the sudden Offence, Pride feels the Affront, the Soul ferments into Wrath, the Tongue gives Reproof in Thunder and sets the softer Part of the Household all in Tears.

The next Day a Plate is let fall from a Servant's Hand, or a Glass is broken and the Wine spilt on the Floor; and if one were to judge of the Mischief done by the Degree of the sudden Clamour, one would be ready to imagine that the Pillars of the House were shaken or thrown down, and the Outcry gave Notice of immediate Ruin and Death.

My Reader (it may be) will presently enquire, *where this House stands?* and *where is this wretched Character to be found?*

I confess I was never yet so unhappy as to live in such a Family, nor was I ever an Eye-

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witness to these Disorders. I must acknowledge also that I know not the Persons nor the Door of their House: Perhaps they are dead, and the rising Generation may be grown calmer and wiser: Nor will I presume to say where any of their Kindred dwell; but I fear we need not go far to seek them. 'Tis well if there be any Street in this great City which cannot shew us such an Inhabitant: 'Tis well if a Month can pass away in any Town in *Great Britain* without some such Ferment of Pride and Passion, some domestick Tumult which has this unhappy Original.

Mark the tempestuous Scene, O my Soul, mark it wheresoever it occurs with just and everlasting Abhorrence; and stand aloof from the Vice that raised it. Pursue and practise, O my Heart, the lovely Virtue of *Humility*: acquire and maintain a low Idea of thy self; then thou wilt bear to have thy *Humour* thwarted, and thy own Will opposed without such clamorous and sounding Consequences; thou

\* I almost reprove my self here and suspect my Friends will reprove me for introducing such low Scenes of Life, and such trivial Occurrences into a grave Discourse. I have put the Matter into the Balances as well as I can, and weighed the Case, and the Result is this. General and distant Declamations seldom strike the Conscience with such Conviction as particular Representations do; and since this Iniquity often betrays itself in these trivial Instances, it is better perhaps to set them forth in their full and proper Light than that the Guilty should never feel a Reproof, who by the very Nature of their Distemper are unwilling to see or learn their own Folly, unless 'tis set in a glaring View.

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wilt bear the cross Incidents of Life without the Ruffle and Disturbance of thy own inward Powers, without the Pain and Terror of thy Kindred and Friends, and without giving half the Street Notice of thy Folly.

But “ strange Doctrine is this, (saith the “ Master of the House) must I not bear Rule “ in my own Family? Must I not be heard “ (says the Mistress) and obey’d by my own “ Servants? Must not the Authority of a Father appear among his Children, and the “ Mother demand due Honour?” Yes, by all Means: And the superior Character should always appear and shine bright before the Household in the Wisdom of the Command or Reproof, and not by the loud and haughty Words or the terrible Airs of the Re-prover. The Authority of a Parent or a Master has but a poor Support where ’tis maintain’d with such unreasonable and noisy Resentments.

Thus far concerning Wrath and Tyranny of the violent and sonorous Kind: But Pride and Humour in some Complexions have their private and sullen Airs, as well as in others the sounding and the clamorous ones. The Soul may be full of SELF and the Man an intolerable Humourist, and yet never shake the House or affright the Neighbourhood. Should you happen to cross his Will in a trifling Instance, he puts on a sudden Gloom of Countenance and assumes a forbidding Brow without a single Word from his Lips; and sometimes ’tis hard



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hard to know what has offended him. Here the haughty and the sullen Humours mingle their cursed Influences; the Soul is like a Prisoner in Majesty, the Wretch stalks about in dark Resentment and supercilious Silence: a short and disdainful Sentence full of Spite and Rancour and Fire shall break out at certain Intervals and give Notice of the Hell within. The proud Wrath which is pent up in the Bosom as in a close and hoysling Furnace, must have Time to vent itself by slow Degrees; in a Day or two or more perhaps the Ferment may subside and the Man return to his Speech again, and to his Hours of Business, of Food and Rest. But after all the poisonous Leaven is left still within and waits only for some new Occasion to heave and swell and raise a fresh Disturbance. I name the *Man* only in this cursed and hateful Character; if the softer Sex should find it working in themselves, I leave them to be their own Reprovers.

Dread the Thoughts, O my Heart, of such a frantick and self-punishing Iniquity. Suppress all haughty Conceits of thy own Worth and Grandeur, lest meeting with some unhappy Ferments of Blood and Complexion of Humours they work up into such a World of Mischiefe. Have a Care of magnifying the Image of thy Self, and thou wilt not become a Slave to such unmanly Humours and such wild and unruly Hurricanes of Spirit. Let the fond Child cry and roar because his Play-thing is broken; Let the Fool storm or grow sullen be-

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because his Will is thwarted; Let the Dog bark and the Ox bellow when the brutal Choler is roused within them; but remember thou art a Man, a reasonable Creature, a Christian. It becomes thee well to know thy self, and to govern thy Conduct and thy Temper. Do not over-rate thy own Fancy or Appetite, nor be too fond of thy own Will. Be not violent in any of thy Desires: All thy Inclinations and thy Aversions to the indifferent and common Things of Life should be but feeble and indifferent: Do not thou imagine thy self worthy of such a profound Subjection of the Wills and Humours of all Mankind to thy own Will and Humour. Remember, O my Soul, thou art upon a Level with all other Men in the World in many more Instances than those few Things wherein Providence has raised thee above them.

III. The Man who has low Thoughts of himself is not ever in Pain to publish his own Excellencies, nor seeking to proclaim his own Qualifications and Honours. Though his Zeal for God and his Desire of the Good of Men forbid him *to wrap his Talent in a Napkin*, yet you find him rather backward at first to appear, and not hasty and zealous to display himself. He hardly hears even the Voice of Providence when it calls him forth to *arise and shine*. He is so fearful of Exaltation among the Great, so sensible of his own Defects, and pays so much Honour to his Fellows, that he thinks

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many a one fitter to perform publick Offices than himself, and to sustain publick Honours. *Less than the least* is his Motto, and therefore he often hides himself as unworthy to be seen and below the Notice of the World.

But if the World should happen to be so just to Merit and Virtue as to raise the humble Man from his obscure Circumstances, and fix him in a Point of Light and Honour, he shall be the last Man that proclaims the *Justice* which the World hath done him, and ascribes it all to the Favour of God and Man. He carries none of those Meannesses about him by which little Souls always distinguish themselves, and betray and expose their Folly; for they are vainly fond of their own new Title and Character, and speedy in demanding due Notice of it from others. The humble Man practised the true Sublime in his lower Station, and you see nothing exalted in him now, tho' his inward Worth is render'd more conspicuous. His Friends and his Kindred find him the same Man still. His Garments of Honour fit close about him and swell not his Figure or Appearance. His Titles add nothing to his own Idea of himself, nor do they tempt him to assume any peculiar Airs. He does not imagine that his Opinions are now grown more sacred or more worthy to be imposed, nor does he give a Loose to any of his Passions with more Freedom or Sovereignty. Before the Hour of his Advancement he was a Diamond in a Cabinet, and he shone at home and gave Light and Beauty



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to what was near him: and now he is the same Jewel set in a publick Ornament of Gold to glitter and give Light to the World, but he owns that he borrows it all from Heaven. Place him on high and displace him again, his constant Business is to approve himself to God and to remember that he is but a Man.

How different a Character is this from what Multitudes assume in our Day? How many are impatient of Obscurity and yet worthless of Observation! They are daily and hourly pushing forward into every Company and fond of shewing themselves to the World betimes, while their Talents are very few and their Furniture exceeding slender. The vain Man is not content to enjoy the common Pleasures of Conversation, but he assumes the first Place in it, and affects to out-shine all the Circle. He is not satisfied to have said a wise or a witty Thing upon a proper Occasion, or to tell it perhaps to a Friend, but without any Occasion at all he must once a Week repeat his wise Sayings to the World: he makes them often hear his Jests over again till they are weary, and is ever acquainting new Company with the pert Repartees that he had made some Days before. These forward and conceited Creatures will make the World know all their Talents of Body and Mind, and will carefully spread abroad those Possessions of Equipage or Title which help to support their Pride: and as a noble Author expresses, *They are so top-full of Self that they spill it upon all the Company:* and

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a nobler Person than he confirms the Reason, *Out of the abundance of their Heart the Mouth speaketh*: and surely if the Vessel of the Heart were not brim-full of *Self* it would not be always running over at the Lips. They regard not the Advice of the wisest of Men, Prov. xxii. 2. *Let another praise thee and not thy own Mouth; not thy Lips, but the Lips of a Stranger.*

Besides these vain and shameless Boasters there is another Tribe of Creatures who are as vain Adorers of *Self*; but they put on a Disguise that they may more effectually and secretly secure the Praises of their dear and beloved Idol. You shall hear them now and then invent an Occasion, without any Incident leading to it, to drop some lessening Word concerning themselves that the Company may give them the Pleasure of contradicting them. 'Tis not that these appearing *Self-abasers* believe a Word of what they say, nor is it said with a Desire that you should believe them when they express their mean Esteem of their own Talents or Virtues; but they are exceeding fond to hear themselves talk'd of to Advantage, and when they give you this Occasion they expect your Civility should incline you to take it. These Persons are always angling for Praise, and some of them practise it in so gross and inartificial a Manner, that the Design of their Vanity too plainly discovers itself. The Bait is lost because the Hook appears; and when they have made a Speech of their own Unworthiness, the Company sometimes is so just and so wise as to allow

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low them to be in the right, and so complaisant as not to contradict them : But then how abject, how mortified and simple they look under the painful Disappointment ! They fish'd for Honour and to their sore Regret they caught the Truth.

O when shall this haughty Thing SELF unlearn all its Vanity ? when shall we be content to be unseen and unnoticed in the World ? to be unknown as *Jesus* the Son of God was for thirty Years together ? *Jesus* the Brightness of his Father's Glory was content to be unknown in a World which he himself created : *He came into the World, and the World was made by him, and the World knew him not.* When shall it be that the profest Followers of the blessed *Jesus* shall have no vain Boasters among them, no Seekers of their own Glory, nor any greedy Devourers of their own Praises ? The Appetite of Praise in the Sense of the wisest of Men is like the Relish of Honey : To eat too much of it takes away the refined Pleasure, and to search out our own Glory is not Glory. Prov. xxv. 27. But in vain hath *Solomon* been preaching to these Men from his own Age till this Day, for the Voice of Wisdom is not heard where *Pride* and *Self* maintain their Dominion. They are blind and deaf to all Instructors.

Yet it must be confess'd there are some Hours and Occasions, there are some Companies and Occurrences in Life which make it proper and almost necessary to speak of ones self to Advantage : Prudence and Religion should direct



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us how to distinguish those Seasons and those Occasions. A wise Man when he is constrained to speak of his own Character or to support his own Honour, feels a sort of inward Uneasiness lest he should be taken for a Vain-glorious Fool, and is even ashamed to speak what is necessary for his own Vindication lest it appear like Vanity and Boasting. See this notably exemplified in the Conduct of *St. Paul* the greatest of the Apostles, who was furnish'd with more sublime Talents and bless'd with more illustrious Success than all the Messengers of the Gospel of *Christ*. This very Man who counts himself *less than the least of all the Saints*, was once reviled by some Upstarts in the *Corinthian Church*, who pretended to rival his Office, and thus they lead his Converts away from the Truth: Then he was compell'd to produce his own Credentials, to display his own divine Commission, and to make his superior Qualifications known to the People. See the 2d *Cor.* the 11th Chap. v. 5, 6. *I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles; though I be rude in Speech, yet not in Knowledge: we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all Things: and then he recounts his abundant Labours, his abundant Sufferings and his Services to Christ and Souls: But mark how often this Man of heavenly Wisdom represents this his Conduct as acting like a Fool, and he seems to blush at himself while he boasts himself a little. v. 16. &c. Let no Man think me a Fool indeed; but if you will think*

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think me so, then as a Fool receive me and permit me to proceed foolishly in this Confidence of boasting: Are my Rivals Israelites? So am I: Are they Ministers of Christ? I speak as a Fool, I am more: In Labours, in Sufferings, in Deaths, more abundant than all of them can ever pretend to. Boasting of ones Self in the Judgment of a great Apostle is so foolish a Thing, that when Wisdom itself requires him to practise it, he is quite ashamed of it, and almost expects that he shall be taken for a Fool.

'Tis the Sentiment of a very famous French Author Mr. Paschal, that "true Philosophy teaches Men to be humble, to conceal Self, to banish the Word *I* for the most Part out of our Conversation; but Christianity and the Gospel have nullified and destroyed it." Yet, alas! what would some Persons have to say in Company, if you cut off from their Lips the beloved Theme of SELF? What could they find to talk of, if you debarr'd them of all the Language of Pride and Envy; the Language of *Pride* wherein SELF is perpetually exalted, and the Language of *Envy* wherein their Neighbours are lessened and reproached?

IV. The Man who has a low Opinion of himself is not so often affronted: he does not so easily take Offence; and when he meets with real Disgrace and Contempt, he does not feel so sharp and painful a Sensation of it as galls the Heart of the Sons of Pride. He can bear with more Ease that others should think  
meanly

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meanly of him because he first thinks meanly of himself : he is much better fitted to go through the World where every one must meet with some Trials and some Reproaches : he learns to bear the Scandal of the World with a happy Indifference, because he is not so solicitous about their Applause : he does not lye so much exposed to disquieting Passions by any Inroads made upon his Honour and Fame, because he has a low Esteem of himself, and is content without Fame and Honour.

But the proud and vain Creatures who are full of SELF and have a high Esteem of their own Persons and their Qualifications, you can hardly speak either to them or of them, but you affront them, unless it be done in a flattering and submissive Manner : and some are so humorfome in their Pride that the very Manner of this Submission must be polite and fashionable, must be agreeable to their Fancy, or else they are affronted and their Choler is raised. The Man of Vanity imagines his Character and his Figure so exalted, as though he had a Right to claim Honour from all around him ; and upon this Account he has an unhappy Right to assume to himself more Affronts than others, and to vex himself with many Resentments above and beyond his Neighbours : The Idea of his own Quality entitles him to it.

Well, Let the vain Man swell thus with his own Idea, his Grandeurs and his Honours, let him maintain and exercise this painful and vexatious Right of continual Resentment, while the



*Sect. IV. in Regard to our Selves.* 63

the God of Heaven fills my Heart with Humility and Peace. Then shall I stand aloof from these honourable Follies, and be delivered from this disquieting and uneasy Conscience of my own Merit: I shall be free from this troublesome and tormenting Right of taking Offence at every Thing: I shall no more resent the little supposed Neglects of my Inferiors, nor teize my own Heart with those Shadows of an Affront which a vain and busy Fancy can create hourly. Grant, O my God, thou Father of my Spirit, that there may be no dark Corner in my Heart to keep such hellish Tinder in it, lest I should be kindled and fired with every flying Spark.

V. The Man who is not wont to raise a great and high Idea of himself can much more easily content himself in a middle Station of Life, without a fond and anxious Pursuit of Wealth and Grandeur either for himself or for his Household. He can rest satisfied in a mean Estate, if the Providence of God so appoint it; for what is there in me (saith he) to deserve or expect Riches or Greatness among Men? But he that carries about him an exalted Image of his own Worth is pushed on by Ambition to climb up to Pinnacles, and to venture upon Methods dangerous to his Soul and Conscience, in order to acquire Wealth as the Support of Equipage and Grandeur. 'Tis hardly possible for a Mortal to be full of *Self*, but he must be *Worldly-minded*: Whereas if we are Christians  
and

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and the Sons of Heaven in this vain and perishing World, God speaks to us for the most Part as he did to *Baruch*, Jer. xlv. 5. *Seekest thou great Things for thy Self, seek them not.*

Stand thou, Oh my Soul, among the Ranks of humble Christians ; look on thy Self as a Pilgrim and Stranger here ; travel as a Foreigner through this dangerous Wilderness, and having Food and Raiment to supply thy Wants and support thy Journey, be content. 'Tis not of much Importance whether thou acquire large Treasures of that sort of Coin which will not pass in the City to which thou art travelling, nor can ever be remitted to thee by any Forms of Exchange. 'Tis not of great Moment whether thou receive Titles and Honours among Foreigners in this strange Country : These Honours and Titles are the Contempt of Angels, and are of no Account in thy native Land, for thou art born from above. Live upon the Views and Hopes of thy fair Inheritance on high, of Honours prepared for thee at home in thy Father's House, among the Sons and Daughters of God, among the Angels of Heaven, and Spirits of just Men made perfect.

Alas ! how contrary is the Spirit of a Christian to the Spirit of this World ! The one is all for *Self* and *Shew* and *Grandeur* ; the other abases *Self*, lies at the Foot of God, and is content without Honour from Men. This Fullness of *Self* is opposite to the very Temper of the Gospel, which requires us to be poor in Spirit ;

Spirit; and yet how ready are we to indulge it? how few are there among those who take up the Name of *Christian* that watch against this Vice; and labour to subdue it? Which of us can lay his Hand upon his Heart and say, *There is no Pride dwells here?*

## S E C T. V.

*The Pretences of the Poor, &c. answered*

**U**PON this Challenge there are two sorts of Men that rise up and deny the Charge, and with their Hand on their Heart solemnly declare, *There is no Pride within them.* These are the *Poor* and the *Faint-hearted*. Let us see what their Pretences are to avoid this general Accusation.

Can I be proud, saith the poor Wretch, that labours for his daily Bread, and can hardly procure it? If you would search for Pride you must go to Palaces and knock at the Gates of Quality. 'Tis only the Great and the Rich among Mankind who look big and despise their Neighbour. They who prosper in the World, and increase in Riches, who are surrounded with Servants, and would be worshipped as little Gods. 'Tis their Eyes which stand out with Fatness, and because they have more than Heart could wish, Pride compasseth them about as a Chain; 'Tis they who talk loftily and set



*their Mouth against the Heavens, they speak wickedly concerning the Oppression of the Poor: But what Pride can be found with us? Our Clothing is mean and tattered, our Food is coarse and scanty, we have nothing to boast of, for we have hardly enough to live upon, and therefore we must needs be humble.*

But search thy own Heart, O Man of Poverty, nor let the Poor among Women neglect the same inward Inquiry. Tell me, art thou content with that low Station in which God hath placed thee? Dost thou not fancy thy self to have deserved something better? Dost thou submit to the Will of God as wise, in making thee Poor and not Rich, a Servant and not a Master? Art thou so well acquainted with thy Sins and Follies as to lie low at the Foot of God, and receive all the little Portion that he gives thee as from meer Grace? Art thou thankful for every Mercy, and patient under all the pressing Afflictions that attend thy low Estate? Doth thy Heart never rise against God the Governor of the World, nor repine at his Dispensations as though he had not treated thee according to thy Merit? Art thou humble enough to receive Alms, if God hath given thee nothing of thy own? And art thou willing to be beholden to others for thy daily Bread, and to accept thy Portion in that way wherein God is pleased to dispense it without murmuring; he that promises his Children in this World Food and Raiment, has never promised to give it them without dependence:  
There

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There is no Promise which binds him to maintain thy Body and thy Pride too.

But let us search a little farther. Thou canst not swell among the great Ones, nor talk much of thy self among thy Superiors, but dost thou never vaunt thy self among thy Equals, and affect a Superiority and Esteem above them? Dost thou not aggrandize thy self and swell in thy little Station upon some supposed Excellencies, either of Beauty of the Face, or Strength of Limbs, or Sharpness of Wit, or Tallness of Stature? Or perhaps thou art vain enough to betray thy Pride even in the Tokens of thy Servitude, because thy Livery is finer or has more Lace upon it than the Coat of thy Neighbour? Ask thy self again, dost thou never set up for a chief Talker in Company, and doth thy Heart never presume that thou art wiser than those above thee without any just reason for it? Canst thou bear to be commanded by others, and contradicted by others, and reprov'd by others without an inward rising Ferment of Wrath, and without returning a word of rash Provocation? Art thou never inclined to Rage and Passion when thy Ears take in a Reproach? Canst thou bear an Injury with such humble Silence, and forgive thy Enemy as a Christian ought to do? Art thou not as ready to give or to take Offence as any of the Rich and the Great? And is it thy *Humility* that inclines thee to take Offence or to give it? Where there is little Forbearance and little Care to please in our

Conduct: surely there is some Pride at Heart. Upon the whole I suspect there are more Quarrels and Contentions among the poorest and meanest of the People than among the Rich, and the High-born: And the wise Man says *'Tis only from Pride cometh Contention.* The polite Education of the Great teaches them to imitate Humility and good Humour, and by this Means many a Quarrel is prevented; whereas the Poor who have been unbred and untaught betray their Pride often, and often rush into clamorous Contentions.

Let me ask thee yet further, Art thou not too fond of some Pre-eminence and Honour, even on a Dunghill? Dost thou never despise, in thy Heart, and disdain those who seem to be inferior to thee in any respect? Art thou not too much ashamed of the Rank of Life where God has placed thee? Dost thou never abstain from any Duties of Religion, or Duties of common Life, merely because thou canst not make so good a Figure among Men as others do, and as thou desirest? Art thou never humorfome and self-will'd, never obstinate and unreasonably positive, answering thy Superiors with Wrath and Rudeness? Art thou never gloomy and fullen after a Rebuke? Is not thy Spirit fretful when thy Will is cross'd, and thy Humour thwarted? Dost thou never meditate Revenge? And now tell me, O Son or Daughter of Poverty, tell me, hast thou no Pride? hast thou none of these Symptoms of this mortal Malady?



Malady? No Spots of this Defilement of Soul?  
No Share in this universal Crime of the Chil-  
dren of *Adam*? Dost thou think that Pride  
never inhabits a Cottage, and never travels but  
in Chariots and Coaches? Art thou so weak  
as to imagine that a thread-bare Garment  
must needs cover a humble Heart?

When thou hast honestly made all these In-  
quiries which I have pointed out, I hope thy  
own Heart will unlearn this Mistake, and teach  
thee that thou hast not escaped this general  
Guilt and Folly. Some of the poorest of  
Mankind have happened to be some of the  
proudest in my Observation that I ever  
met with, and 'tis possible that others have  
made the same Remark.

Let us enquire next of the *saint-hearted*  
Man, *the Coward of Soul, who flatters his In-*  
*firmity*, and thinks himself to be all Humility  
and Meekness. I own, saith he, I have a Ten-  
derness for my self, but I have no Pride. If I  
am injured and reproached, I cannot well bear it,  
but I am all in Tears; I tremble and answer  
not again; my Soul sinks within me at the  
Words of Slander, and I die at the Voice of  
a proud Oppressor, surely this Heart of mine  
is humble.

But tell me, O Man, if thou hadst Cou-  
rage and Power to revenge the Affront, wouldst  
thou be thus patient? If thou hadst Wealth  
and Dignity in the World to support thee,  
wouldst thou not retort the Reproaches of thy  
Adversary, and look down with a sort of  
Disdain

Disdain upon him who now disdains thee? It is Impotence then and Cowardice, but not Humility which makes thee imitate Patientie and Meekness. It is Abjectness of Spirit and want of Power, and not Christian Lowliness, that renders thee so silent under Injuries. Christ Jesus could command Legions of Angels to destroy his Blasphemers; yet when he was reviled, he bore it patiently, and reviled not again: he endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself. But tell me, Friend, dost thou never revile those in secret who have reviled thee in publick? Art thou not impatient and inwardly fretful under the Hand of God or Man beyond all reasonable Degrees? Are not thy Lips open in Slander where those whom thou slanderest cannot hear thee? Art thou not ready sometimes to take Offence at some innocent Words that are spoken, and where perhaps an Affront was never designed? How dost thou bear a Contradiction to thy Sayings, or Opposition to thy Will? Dost thou not kindle into secret Resentment and let Wrath burn inwardly on such Occasions? Dost not thy Bosom swell with Indignation at such a Season, though thou art afraid to vent it? What is it but an excessive Tenderness for thy self, and undue Love of Honour and Applause, and the high Opinion that thou hadst form'd of thy Worth, that makes thee bear Contempt and Reproach so ill, and die under a word of Slander?

Say again, What is it but the Pride of thy Heart that tempts thee never to acknowledge a Mistake, but always to colour it over with a Semblance of Truth? Art thou a Son or a Daughter of Eve, and yet infallible and not capable of mistaking? Canst thou ever look back and remember the Time when thou didst readily confess any Folly, or say, *I was mistaken* or *I acted amiss*, and yet has not thy Heart been sometimes sensible that thou wert in the wrong? What is it but Pride then that makes these Words so hard to be pronounced? Is it not thy Vanity of Mind, and unreasonable Esteem of thy self that forbids thee even to see thy Error, or to confess thy Fault, while all that are around thee behold thy Mistake and thy Misconduct? Is it thy Humility that makes thee abound so much in thy own Sense? Is it Humility that raises such an Anguish of Heart, and such a painful Vexation within, when thou art treated with small Indecencies by thy fellow Creatures? Is it Humility that ruffles thy Temper, and tears thy Spirit when thou art not esteemed and honoured according to thy Worth? or is it not rather an excessive and criminal Tenderness for Self, and an Overvalue of thy own Merit? That is but poor Virtue that cannot bear to be despised, but faints under a Word of Contempt and Scorn; poor Pretence to Virtue indeed that cannot support itself under an Affront from a Fellow-Worm.

I will



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I will readily grant that the Rich and the Mighty, and the Bold and the High-spirited and the High-born among Men, lie much more under Temptations to Pride; 'tis the very Sin of their Constitution or their Condition in Life, and perhaps they are more frequently guilty of this Iniquity; but if we would all of us search our Hearts honestly, and examine our Conduct by sincere Inquiries, there is not one of us either in high or low State would be able to excuse ourselves from this universal Contagion and Guilt, this original Degeneracy and over-spreading blemish of human Nature.

SECT. VI.

*The Humility and Exaltation of Christ  
proposed as our Pattern.*

**A**MONG all the Hearts that God ever made there have never been but three entirely free from this Stain and Poison; two of them were the Hearts of *Adam* and *Eve* in the Day of their Innocence, and happy had it been for us, if Pride had never found an Entrance there. The third was the Heart of the Man *Jesus* who is God's most beloved Son. 'Twas amazing Humility indeed in this glorious Person the Son of God that he would condescend to be born a Son of Man, that he should leave the Bosom of the Father and all the Glories there to dwell in Flesh and Blood: and when

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Sect. VI. *proposed as our Pattern.* 63

he enter'd our World there was nothing round him but the Signs of Humiliation and the Marks of deep Abasement: He became the Child of a poor Maid in *Galilee*, he was content to be born in a Stable, for there was no Room for him in the House: He lay down to take his first Nap in a Manger, below the Rank and Condition of Men; and as though he were a Companion for meaner Creatures, he borrowed his Dwelling from the Ox and the Ass. This was the Accommodation, this the Presence-Chamber of the King of *Israel*, of the Son of God. Come let us thus contemplate the glorious Humility of the blessed *Jesus*, the humble Infancy of our adored Saviour, and let us become Infants and humble.

Let us follow and observe him in the Progress of Life, when he appear'd as a young Carpenter, when he sweat and labour'd in the Trade of his Father *Joseph*, when he assisted him, as ancient History informs us, to make Yokes for Oxen, and lived in a lowly Cottage suited to those Circumstances. No Rooms of State, no rich Hangings, no Carpets or Furniture of Silk and Gold, no costly and glittering Things about him. And when he began his Ministry, he travel'd through the Country on Foot to preach his divine Gospel when he might have been borne on the Wings of Angels. He was content with mean Lodging in the Tents of Fishermen, and sometimes *the Lord of Glory had not where to lay his Head*. He never accepted but of one gaudy Day in

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the Period of his Life, and then his highest Triumph was to ride upon the Colt of an Ass into *Jerusalem*: his way was strew'd with Branches of Trees and the Garments of the Poor, and he was attended with a shouting Train of the lower Ranks of the People: But his more constant Dwelling was in Cottages, and his Accoutrements betrayed universal Poverty and Meanness: An obscure Life on Earth veiled the Majesty of the King of Heaven: Contempt and Scorn, Infamy and Reproach were his daily Companions in the Streets of *Jerusalem*, and his Table and his Lodging were with poor Fishermen in *Galilee*, the most contemptible Part of all the Country of the *Jews*.

And let it be observed here, that every Instance of Meanness and Poverty in the Life and Circumstances of the blessed *Jesus* was a distinct Token of the Humility of his Soul, for 'twas chosen Poverty, 'twas assumed Meanness: When he was rich in the Glories and Splendors of his Father's Court in Heaven, he laid them all aside for our Sakes, and *became poor on Earth, that through his Poverty we might be made rich.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

What a shameful Dimness and Disgrace, what divine Contempt has the Son of God cast on all the Lustre and Glory of this World by his Choice of so mean Accommodations and so poor an Equipage? What a holy Disdain of all earthly Grandeur and Magnificence should we learn from the Incarnation and the Life of the



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the holy *Jesus*? Even Meanness and Poverty should lose their disgraceful Appearances and seem almost an amiable Sort of Apparel to us when we remember they were worn by the Son of God.

Think with thy self, O my Soul, What if thou art not seated among the glittering Idols of this World, the Men of Figure and Quality and exalted Station? Remember the blessed *Jesus* was thy Forerunner in a low and humble Rank of Life; *Jesus*, who went thro' the Depths of Abasement to the Temple of the highest Honour; and divine Wisdom assures thee that *Before Honour is Humility*. Prov. xv.

33. What if thou hast not the Favour of the Rich and the Society of the Great Ones of the Earth? Dost thou not hear the Promise of the God of Heaven and feel the divine Encouragement with surprizing Delight? *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabits Eternity, whose Name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place: With him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit will I dwell*, Isa. lvii. 15. I will be his Life and his Support. The Soul that is truly humble upon religious Principles when he is cast out of the Company of the Great and the Wealthy with Scorn is a Partner of the Sufferings of the holy *Jesus*, is an Imitator of his Virtues, and he shall share in his sacred Honours: he shall have the great and blessed God come down and dwell with him here on Earth to enrich him with Grace, and he shall be raised to dwell for ever in the Courts of Heaven with God and with his Son *Jesus*, who is the Lord of Glory. Think

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Think yet further, O my Soul, what if thy Station and Place in the visible Church should be low and mean, as a Door-keeper in the House of thy God, this will not give thy Heart any sensible Disquietude, while thou canst assume St. *Paul's* Motto in my Text, *Less than the least of all the Saints.* *Jesus* and his Disciples were even cast out of the Synagogue, *John ix. 22. Luk. iv. 28.* Yet he was the first beloved Son of God and the Chief of all the Saints both in the lower and in the upper Worlds. Look up, my Eyes, and behold him now on the Throne of Heaven, and there also the humblest among the holy Ones sits nearest to his Majesty; for that Seat is prepar'd for those who are most like himself.

Labour hourly to subdue thy Pride and Fullness of Self, Oh my Soul, pursue the Grace of Humility here below in the deepest Degrees of it, and this shall prepare thee for some exalted Station on high. I am verily persuaded the Man who called himself *the least of Saints* in this World has a Place of Honour provided for him among the highest in the World above; and perhaps he sits next to the right Hand of *Jesus* who is enthron'd in Glory at the right Hand of God.

Farewell then Vanity and Pride! Farewell ye Scenes of Grandeur, ye flattering and fading Glories of this Life! Farewell ye vain and ambitious Titles among my Fellow Worms! Be my Ears deaf and my Heart dead to all the noisy Pomp, to all the sounding Honours of  
this

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this World! Let me be a humble and a holy  
Follower of the holy and the humble *Jesus*! I  
adore him, I love him, I would fain be more  
like him. He is my divine Example and my  
Forerunner to the World of Joy above: He  
has a Crown there provided for every humble  
Soul, a Crown which shall never fade: he has  
Names of Dignity for all his Saints, but on his  
own sacred Head are many Crowns: To his  
Name belong superior Honours: To the Lamb  
that was slain ascribe Glory and Majesty and  
universal Blessing for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*THE END.*

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